

Summer Worship at First UNJ - 2022

Courage - Baglieri

Welcome and Greet Each Other

[Please say who you are, why we are gathered as we are this summer]

Reminder of Our Covenant - Adopted at the 2017 congregational meeting.

Chalice Lighting - read by member

“Love is the spirit of our community, and service is our gift. This is our great covenant, to dwell together in peace, to seek the truth in freedom, and to help one another. “

Sharing Joys, Sorrows, Milestones

Introduction of today's theme

Courage is a word that comes from a root that means “heart.” To “encourage” is to “put heart into” another person. “Courage,” wrote Martin Luther King, Jr., “is the power of the mind to overcome fear.” This is a good starting point to begin an exploration of courage. But first, fear. To truly appreciate its paralyzing power, we need only ask in some situations, “What would I do in this situation if I was not afraid?” The answer can be enlightening; an answer that reveals how fear shrinks the options that we believe are available to us. It is in this sense that Anaïs Nin said, “Life shrinks or expands in proportion to one’s courage.” For the Greek philosophers, courage was one of the cardinal virtues. Given the fear, hatred, and despair in the world, courage is essential to survival. That there is so much fear, hatred, and despair also suggest that courage is a virtue in short supply. We should take heart because courage can be cultivated.

Ralph Waldo Emerson said

“Whatever you do, you need courage. Whatever course you decide upon, there is always someone to tell you that you are wrong. There are always difficulties arising that tempt you to believe your critics are right. To map out a course of action and follow it to an end requires some of the same courage that a soldier needs. Peace has its victories, but it takes brave men and women to win them.”

Focusing Questions

What memories formed your earliest ideas of what “Courage” means?

How has your adult understanding informed your ideas since then?

Reading of Quotes (printed for all)

What struck you most profoundly about any of the quotes and why?

2 minutes to share a response to the question. No cross-talk to the responses. One person speaks for oneself, then the next person does the same, with some silence or space between. People can speak as they are moved to.

Silence

After hearing everyone’s statements, the leader invites the group to sit in silence for 2-3 minutes.

Share the Plate [pass the basket around after the period of silence is over.]

Reflection - Reading 1

The Cadence of Courage by Rev. Galen Guengerich

Reflection - Reading 2

Hope & Courage by Liko Smith-Doo

***The Cadence of Courage* by Rev. Galen Guengerich**

When asked by Socrates to say what courage is, Laches replies, that's easy enough. Anyone who stays at his post, faces the enemy, and doesn't run away, you may be sure is courageous.

Surely courage is more than staying put in battle, Socrates replies. Sometimes great victories are won by falling back and regrouping. Besides, people can be courageous in other areas of life: against the perils of the sea, for example, or against disease or poverty. People can also be courageous in public affairs, or in facing their own desires and pleasures.

This is quite true, Laches agrees. ...Socrates turns to Nikias, who ...ventures that courage is somehow related to the goal being sought or the danger being avoided. Nikias eventually concludes that courage requires wisdom—the knowledge of what is good and worthy of being pursued, as well as what is evil and must therefore be avoided.

...The essence of courage ...is to pursue a goal that is morally worthy or stand up against a force that is morally repugnant—despite the risks involved.

...To know courage is to know a calling that is greater than fear.

...Courage is not the feeling that good is invincible, nor is it the conviction that evil can never prosper. Rather, courage is a march through the fear to confront what is evil and pursue what is good. Courage has a cadence. It's the wisdom to know which direction to go and the willingness to take a step in that direction. Whatever your fear, have

courage. Face the direction you must go. Then take the first step. And then keep marching.

Source: [God Revised: How Religion Must Evolve in a Scientific Age](#) by Galen Guengerich

Hope & Courage by Liko Smith-Doo

“If you lose hope, ...you lose that courage to be, that quality that helps you go on in spite of it all,” said Martin Luther King Jr. in a 1967 Christmas sermon. He was talking about the civil rights movement, but his words apply ...as well to the movement against climate change.

Mainstream media’s focus on catastrophe can be very detrimental.... Even the most well-meaning journalists can oftentimes act as poison for the potential activist. This leads many to stop being able to envision a better future, instead spiraling into ...despair and undirected rage. A lot of activists say hope is the solution to despair—but hope alone will not solve climate change. We will [also] need courage to do that....

The number of situations that have been solved with courage even after all hope was lost is staggering. In 1940, after most news outlets declared the Dunkirk evacuation an unmitigated disaster, thousands of people had the courage to get on tiny boats and cross the Nazi-infested English Channel. ...When hope falters, the only options left are courage or collapse.

Courage is not something you can spread as easily as hope, but ...it is ...a powerful force for good. Courage ...

is waking up every day knowing we walk on a changing earth and imagining what possibilities that entails, along with the problems that it will inevitably present.

Hope and courage are at their absolute best when they work together, with hope being a moral imperative around which a movement can unite and courage being the will to persevere even through the toughest of situations.

Second Round of Comments - Comments and discussion with each other

“What is something that is alive and real for you now that will help you connect to us IF you share it?”

Extinguishing the chalice - Responsive

“We extinguish this flame, but not the light of truth, the warmth of community, or the fire of commitment. These we carry in our hearts until we are together again.”

“Courage is not the absence of fear, but rather the judgment that something else is more important than fear.” Ambrose Redmoon

“People are made of flesh and blood and a miracle fiber called courage.” Mignon McLaughlin

“Courage is as often the outcome of despair as of hope; in the one case we have nothing to lose, in the other everything to gain.” Diane de Poitiers

“When we are afraid, we ought not to occupy ourselves with endeavoring to prove that there is no danger, but in strengthening ourselves to go on in spite of the danger.” Mark Rutherford

“Courage is a gift. Those having it never know for sure if they have it till the test comes. And those having it in one test never know for sure if they will have it when the next test comes.” Carl Sandburg

“Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear—not absence of fear.” Mark Twain

“To live with fear and not be afraid is the final test of maturity.” Edward Weeks

“Courage is not simply one of the virtues, but the form of every virtue at the testing point.” C.S. Lewis

**“Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak;
courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.”
Winston Churchill**

**“One person with courage makes a majority.” Andrew
Jackson**

**“The important thing is this: To be able at any moment
to sacrifice what we are for what we could become.”
Charles Dubois**

**“One isn’t necessarily born with courage, but one is
born with potential. Without courage, we cannot
practice any other virtue with consistency. We can’t be
kind, true, merciful, generous, or honest.” Maya
Angelou**

**“The secret of happiness is freedom, the secret of
freedom is courage.” Carrie Jones**

**“You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every
experience in which you really stop to look fear in the
face. You must do the thing which you think you
cannot do.” Eleanor Roosevelt**

**“Courage can’t see around corners, but goes around
them anyway.” Mignon McLaughlin**

**“Courage is grace under pressure.” Ernest
Hemingway**

“Something happens to me when I witness someone’s courage. They may not know I’m watching and I might not let them know. But something happens to me that will last me for a lifetime. To fill me when I’m empty, and rock me when I’m low.” Holly Near

“But a man or woman becomes fully human only by his or her choices and his or her commitment to them. People attain worth and dignity by the multitude of decisions they make from day by day. These decisions require courage.” Rollo May

“It takes courage to push yourself to places that you have never been before... to test your limits... to break through barriers. And the day came when the risk it took to remain tight inside the bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.” Anaïs Nin

“The highest courage is to dare to be yourself in the face of adversity. Choosing right over wrong, ethics over convenience, and truth over popularity...these are the choices that measure your life. Travel the path of integrity without looking back, for there is never a wrong time to do the right thing.” Source Unknown

“Go to the edge of the cliff and jump off. Build your wings on the way down.” Ray Bradbury

“...part of us dies when we know that something is wrong, yet do nothing. We could call this radical dignity. We don’t have to tackle every issue, but if we remain silent in the face of cruelty, injustice, and oppression, we sacrifice part of our soul.” Paul Rogat Loeb

“Love makes us human; courage makes us extraordinary.” Faryal K. Kharal

“Courage doesn’t happen when you have all the answers. It happens when you are ready to face the questions you have been avoiding your whole life.” Shannon L. Alder

“God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.” Reinhold Niebuhr

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.” Ralph Waldo Emerson

“There are all kinds of courage. It takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to our enemies, but just as much to stand up to our friends.” J. K. Rowling

“Courage doesn’t always roar. Sometimes courage is the little voice at the end of the day that says I’ll try again tomorrow.” Mary Anne Radmacher

“I wanted you to see what real courage is, instead of getting the idea that courage is a man with a gun in his hand. It’s when you know you’re licked before you begin but you begin anyway and you see it through no matter what.” Harper Lee

“Courage is not the towering oak that sees storms come and go; it is the fragile blossom that opens in the snow.” Alice M. Swaim

“Sometimes even to live is an act of courage.” Seneca